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THEOSOPHY

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, AND THE BROTHERHOOD OF HUMANITY

THE STUDY OF OCCULT SCIENCE AND PHILOSOPHY, AND ARYAN LITERATURE

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WHILE the Christian is taught that the human soul is a breath of God—being created by him for sempiternal existence, i.e., having a beginning, but no end (and therefore never to be called eternal)—the Occult teaching says, "Nothing is created, but is only transformed. Nothing can manifest itself in this universe—from a globe down to a vague, rapid thought—that was not in the universe already; everything on the subjective plane is an eternal is; as everything on the objective plane is an ever becoming—because transitory."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

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(*b*) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and

(*c*) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

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A U M

Our lives are part of the universe and will last as long.
—W. MACNEILE DIXON

THEOSOPHY

Vol. XLVIII September, 1960 No. 11

DIRECT ENCOUNTER

AT some point in the cycle of human development, it must be, the individual rejoins the world of nature through conscious acceptance of its law. Until that time he struggles desperately against the resolution of his being as though threatened by a dark annihilation. He spins little theories of how nature ought to behave, of how his own doctrine of the good of all should be served by the processes of life, and waits in tired apprehension lest his theory prove untrue. And of course, it *is* proved untrue, save for the slender golden thread which makes him keep on striving, and formulate his dreams anew.

The wonder is not that human beings make so many mistakes, but that, making them, they are not fatally disheartened. This persistence of the spirit is the human share of divinity. There is some private voice which continually urges: there is nothing else to do. Always, the future is shadowed by a blessed ignorance. Who, thinking of himself, would want to commit his future to unending toil? Yet the same one, forgetting himself, resolves upon nothing else.

Time was when every human undertaking was seen as symbol and image of the traveling on this path. The person who fulfilled his work and role on earth could feel that he was slowly wearing away the obstacles to a higher destiny. There were rules to observe, duties to perform, and sometimes approval to be gained. Both Great Nature and the wise were his instructors. He could see in the world about him the example of an endless energy and also a serene contentment. The only fulfillment of life was life itself. What more could the flower ask than to bloom upon its day in the warm summer sun? The oak, immobilely

rooted to its spot, would cast its acorns, then shield the generations of its offspring with vast unknowing tenderness. What man, wandering in the wilderness, can fail to envy the spirit of the trees, the joy of all things living, the splendid unambition of the natural world?

The human species, born into a matrix of tradition, a kind of grain of the direction of human life, for long and well-nigh endless generations could find its way by following well-marked courses. Who could have told, in those ancient days, that there would come a withering of tradition? The wise, perhaps, had known that there would be a time when men would have to create their own traditions, forging from the speechless earth new symbols and universal meanings, but who would frighten the young with tales of trials so far away?

To look out, today, into the depths of space, is to encounter endless silences. The stars, in their impersonal blinking, seem entirely cut off from our destiny. The waters, once types of the sea of life, are now in our abstracting eyes only samples of the chemistry of our environment, the tool of power and the fluids of industrial process. How shall they and we regain a membership in the confraternity of being?

We are all starkly broken down by the fires of analysis. While men pursued the atom to its lair of nothingness, all of the old habitations of meaning fell away to dust. Degree and order, all the old things, lost their usefulness. The world became indeed a vast orphanage, filled with peoples who longed to find their homes, yet who, looking about, saw that the world had moved into a new and strange neighborhood—a place where no homes were, but only noisy machines and swift vehicles to carry the homeless from place to place. What kind of courage must men gain to find a home in the shadowless void? How must the speech of the heart be strengthened in order to be heard in all this crying carnage?

There is however this: that a wisdom gained in such an age is an unbetrayable wisdom; and the knowledge collected from the naked realities of being can never be lost. In such an age, men begin to build upon a core of hard-won certainties which no cycle, no cataclysm, not even a shaking of the poles can put in disarray.

FRAGMENTS OF OCCULT TRUTH

[The first three articles of a series under the foregoing title were written by H. P. Blavatsky in response to a letter from W. H. Terry, of Australia, in which he took exception to what H.P.B. calls "some supposed errors of Occultists when dealing with the phenomena of Spiritualism." Mr. Terry writes upon Spirits Embodied and Disembodied, objecting to the fact that many articles by "brother Theosophists" are "ignoring disembodied human spirits as factors in the production of occult mental and physical phenomena." Twenty years of investigation, Mr. Terry asserts, "has afforded me conclusive evidence that disembodied spirits can and do produce physical and mental phenomena on the surface of this world and of the independent action of their intelligence, at least, so far as the influence of the embodied spirits of those in communication was concerned." Instances given by Mr. Terry in support of his contention that these phenomena are "undoubtedly the result of spiritual forces" appear in THEOSOPHY 2:97. This article was first published in the *Theosophist* for October, 1881, and was reprinted in THEOSOPHY for January, 1914.— Eds. THEOSOPHY]

IT is but fair that we should meet the charge brought, and in the same friendly and frank spirit shown in his letter by our esteemed Australian brother Theosophist. Until some one more competent enters the arena of discussion to pick up the glove flung by Spiritualism to Theosophy across the oceans, we will take the liberty of saying a few words—not in our defense—but as a matter of courtesy to our correspondent.

"Those Theosophists who deny to disembodied spirits a legitimate share in the marvellous phenomena" are few, indeed, for the great majority of Theosophists concern themselves with Spiritualism very little,—if at all. Indeed, our members may be divided into five principal classes and described as follows:—

(1) Men profoundly concerned in the revival of their respective religious philosophies in all their pristine purity—Buddhist devotees outnumbering all others. These neither know of, nor do they care for, Spiritualism.

(2) Students of various philosophies, searchers after truth, whencesoever it may come. They neither believe nor disbelieve in spirits. They are open to conviction in any way, but will accept nothing on second-hand testimony.

(3) Materialists, Freethinkers, Agnostics, who care as little for Occultism as they do for Spiritualism. Their only concern is to free the masses from the fetters of ignorance and superstition, and educate them. Many, indeed most of them, are philanthropists who hold it more expedient to devote their energies to the assistance of the living, than to occupy their time in conversations with the dead.

(4) Spiritualists and Spiritists who could not well be accused of any such "heresy." And finally,

(5) Occultists, who do not number half a per cent, in the Theosophical Society.

These latter are the only "Theosophists" who are really open to our correspondent's accusation and even these, if we look beyond the veil of words which more or less conceals the ideas of both Spiritualists and Occultists, will prove to differ less widely on these points from our correspondent than he seems to suppose. For, in this as in so many other cases, it is in a great measure to the different significations attached to the same terms by the two parties, that their apparent irreconcilable divergence is due. "Words" as Bacon, we think, says, "mightily perplex the wisdom of the wisest, and like a Tartar's bow shoot backwards into the minds of those that follow them," and so here the conflict of opinions between Spiritualists and Occultists is solely due to the fact that the former (who overrate their quality and character) dignify by the name of "spirits" certain *reliquiae* of deceased human beings, while the Occultists reserve the name of Spirit for the highest principle of human nature and treat these *reliquiae* as mere *eidolons,* or astral *simulacra,* of the real spirit.

In order to understand clearly the view of the Occultists, it is necessary to glance at the constitution of the living human being. Even the spiritual theory teaches that man is a trinity, composed of (1) a higher spirit, or the "Spiritual Soul" as ancient philosophers designated it; (2) its envelope—the ethereal form or shadow of the body—called by the Neoplatonists the "animal soul"; and (3) the physical body.

Although from one point of view this is broadly correct, yet, according to Occultists, to render our conceptions of this truth clearer and follow successfully the course of man after death, it is necessary to subdivide further these three entities and resolve them into their constituent principles. This analysis being almost wholly unknown to Western nations, it is difficult in some cases to find any English words by which to

represent the Occult subdivisions, but we give them in the least obscure phraseology that we can command.

Divisions of the Spiritualists.

1. The body.
2. The Animal Soul or *Perisprit*.
3. The Spiritual Soul or Spirit.

Subdivisions of the Occultists.

1. The Physical body, composed wholly of matter in its grossest and most tangible form.
2. The Vital principle—(or *Jiv-atma*),—a form of force, indestructible and when disconnected with one set of atoms, becoming attracted immediately by others.
3. The Astral body (*Linga Sharira*) composed of highly etherialized matter; in its habitual passive state, the perfect but very shadowy duplicate of the body; its activity, consolidation and form depending entirely on the *kama rupa*.
4. The Astral shape (*kama rupa*) or body of desire, a principle defining the configuration of—
5. The animal or physical intelligence or consciousness or Ego, analogous to, though proportionately higher in degree than, the reason, instinct, memory, imagination, etc., existing[1] in the higher animals.
6. The Higher or Spiritual intelligence or consciousness, or spiritual Ego, in which mainly resides the sense of consciousness in the *perfect* man, though the lower dimmer animal consciousness coexists in No. 5.
7. The Spirit—an emanation from the ABSOLUTE; uncreated; eternal; a state rather than a being.

[1] Western Science, of course, as a rule, holds that animals have no conscious Ego, but this we know to be erroneous; they possess no spiritual, but they *do* possess an animal con-

Now the change we call death, only immediately affects the first three constituents; the body decomposes to enter into new combinations, and the vital force is dissipated to help to animate new organisms, and the astral human form (Linga Sharira) dies with the body.

There remain four principles. As a rule (we except the cases of higher adepts) one of two things occurs in accordance with the Universal Law of Affinity. If the spiritual EGO has been in life, material in its tendencies, placing its main enjoyment in, and centering its desires on, material objects and the gratification of earthly desires, then at death, it continues to cling blindly to the lower elements of its late combination, and the true spirit severs itself from these and passes away elsewhere. To follow its course is beside the present question since the remaining principles in which personal or animal consciousness remains have parted with it forever, and it would require a complete exposition of the entire philosophy of Occultism to explain fully *its* course; suffice it to say, now, that it passes away (taking with it no fragment of the individual consciousness of the man with which it was temporarily associated) to fulfill its mission, still guided and governed by the irresistible cyclic impulse which first projected it through the veil of primitive kosmic matter.

But if, on the other hand, the tendencies of the EGO have been towards things spiritual, if its aspirations have been heavenward (we use a conventional term), if it have, when weighed as it were in the balance, a greater affinity for the spiritual than for the earthly constituents (with their accompanying desires) of the combination in which it recently took part, then it will cling to the spirit, and with this pass into the adjoining so-called world of effects (in reality, a state, and not a place), and there purified of much of its still remaining material taints, evolve

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sciousness. Could men communicate with them, they would discover not only this, but also that many of the anthropoid apes possess an intelligence, consciousness, etc., little inferior to that of lunatics and madmen, and some desperately wicked and depraved men who have, in fact, become animals, through the loss, temporary or permanent, of their sixth and seventh principles, even while the combination of the other five principles is still intact, *i.e.*, even during life.

Was it some hazy tradition of the truth handed down through the Romish Church, which has ever possessed some secret knowledge of the teachings of the ancient mysteries, or was it the great Poet Soul's own glimpses into the Astral Light, that made Dante represent the souls of several of his enemies as already in the "Inferno," though the men themselves still lived upon earth? Of course, the fragment of truth thus embodied, was utterly distorted by the malign influence of the then prevalent material Hell superstition—but it was quite possible, as the Modern West has still to realize, that the souls of some of these evil men might have already passed away (though not to the fabled Inferno), whilst the men themselves still lived.—Ed. THEOS.

out of itself by the spirit's aid a new Ego, to be reborn (after a brief period of freedom and enjoyment) in the next higher world of causes, an objective world similar to this present globe of ours, but higher in the spiritual scale, where matter and material tendencies and desires play a far less important part than here.

In either case, it is not a matter of Judgment, of Salvation and Damnation, of Heaven and Hell, but solely the operation of the Universal Law of Affinity or Attraction, which makes the EGO cling in one case to the more material, in the other to the spiritual components of the late, now death-parted aggregation. Now neither during its gestation in the subjective world of effects, nor during its temporary period of the enjoyment in its newly evolved Ego-hood of the fruits of the good deeds, its *Karma* on earth, nor after its entry on rebirth into the higher objective world of causes can the Ego re-enter this present world. During the first period it is so to speak, dormant, and can no more issue from the state in which it is developing than a child can come out of its mother's womb to pay a visit before the period of pregnancy concludes. During the second period, however etherial and purified of gross matter the regenerated Ego may be, it is still subject to the physical and universal laws of matter. It *cannot,* even if it would, span the abyss that separates its state from ours. It can be visited in spirit by men, it cannot descend into our grosser atmosphere and reach us. It attracts, it cannot be attracted, its spiritual polarity presenting an insuperable obstacle. Once reborn into the higher world (and independent of the physical impossibility of any communication between its world and ours, to all but the very highest adepts) the new Ego has become a new person; it has lost its old consciousness linked with earthly experiences and has acquired a new consciousness which, as time rolls on, will be interpenetrated by its experiences in that higher sphere. The time will come, no doubt, but many steps higher on the ladder, when the Ego will regain its consciousness of all its past stages of existence, but in the next higher world of causes or activity, to our own, the new Ego has no more remembrance of its earthly career than we have of the life that preceded this present one.

Therefore it is that the Occultists maintain that no SPIRITS of the departed can appear or take part in the phenomena of séance-rooms. To what *can* appear and take part in these, the Occultists refuse the name of spirits.

But may it be said what it is that *can* appear?

We reply—merely the animal souls or perisprits of the deceased. It might appear from what we have said that while this, according to our previous exposition, would be true in the case of the spiritually-minded, in that of the materially-minded we should have these *plus* the spiritual Ego or consciousness. But such is not the case. Immediately on the severance of the spirit, whether at death, or (as, we have already hinted, is sometimes the case) before death, the spiritual Ego is dissipated and ceases to exist. It is the result of the action of spirit on matter, and it might, to render the matter more clear, be described as a combination of spirit and matter, just as flame is the result of the combination of oxygen with the substance being oxygenized and might loosely be described as the combination of the two. Withdraw the oxygen and the flame ceases, withdraw the spirit, and the spiritual EGO disappears. The sense of individuality in spirit cannot exist without combination with matter. Thus the pure planetary spirits, when first propelled into the circle of necessity, have no individual consciousness, only the absolute consciousness which they share with all fragments of the spirit hitherto entirely uncombined with matter. As they, entering into generation, descend the ladder and grow gradually more and more hemmed in by matter and isolated from the universal spirit, so the sense of individuality, the spiritual Egoship, grows. How finally on re-ascending the circle, step by step, they regain on reunion with the universal, the absolute consciousness, and simultaneously all the individual consciousness which they have developed at each stage of their descending and ascending progress, is one of the highest mysteries.

But to return to the spiritual Egoship developed on this earth; if too tainted to follow the spirit in its upward course, it is, as it were, forthwith torn asunder from it. Left in the terrestrial atmosphere without the sustaining spirit that gave it existence, it has to disappear as the flame does when the oxygen is exhausted. All material elements which in combination with the spirit gave it a consistency, fly by the Law of Affinity to join the two other principles that remain of the perisprit or animal soul, and the spiritual Ego ceases to exist.

Thus alike in all cases all that remain, all that can appear, are the shells of the deceased, the two principles which we call the animal or surviving astral souls, or animal Ego.

But there is this to be noted. As the clay, as Saadi says, long retains

traces of the perfume of the roses, which once honoured it with their companionship, so the etherialized matter which has been in combination with spirit, long retains a power of resisting disintegration. The more pure the spiritual Ego, the less of the matter which in combination with the spirit went to form it, does it leave behind clinging to the two principles; the more impure, the greater the mass of such spirit-vitalized matter which remains to invigorate the *reliquiae*.

Thus it follows that in the case of the pure and good, the shells rapidly disintegrate, and the animal soul having ever been kept in subjection is feeble and will-less, and it can very rarely, if ever, happen that such should voluntarily appear or manifest themselves—*their* vitality, desires and aspirations almost exclusively existed in what has passed away. No doubt a power exists which can compel even these to appear, a power taught by the evil science of necromancy, rightly denounced by all good men of old. But why evil it may be asked? Because until these shells have dissipated, a certain sympathy exists between them and the departed spiritual Ego which is gestating in the fathomless womb of the adjoining world of effects, and to disturb the shells by necromantic sorcery is at the same time to disturb the foetal spiritual Ego.

We said that these shells in such cases rapidly decay, the rapidity being exactly proportioned to the purity of the departed spiritual Ego, and we may add that similarly the rapidity of gestation of the new Ego is proportioned to the purity of the old Ego out of which it is evolved. Happily necromancy is unknown to modern Spiritualists, so that it is next to impossible that the *reliquiae* of the good and pure should ever appear in the séance-room. No doubt, the *simulacra* of some spiritual Egos whose fate trembled in the balance, whose affinities, earthwards and heavenwards, to use the popular phraseology, were nearly equal, who have too much of the matter behind that has been in combination to form them, who will lie long in foetal bonds before being able to develop the new Ego-hood; no doubt, we say such *simulacra* may survive longer and may occasionally appear under exceptional conditions in séance-rooms, with a dim-dazed consciousness of their past lives. But even this, owing to the conditions of the case, will be rare, and they will never be active or intelligent, as the stronger portions of their wills—the higher portions of their intelligence—have gone elsewhere.

Nature draws no hard and fast lines though in the balance of forces very slight differences in opposing energies may produce the most diver-

gent results. All entities shade off from one end to the other of the chain by imperceptible degrees, and it is impossible for man to gauge the exact degree of purity of the deceased at which the re-appearance voluntarily of his *reliquiae* through the agency of mediumship becomes impossible, but it is absolutely true that, broadly speaking, as a law, it is only the *reliquiae* of non-spiritually-minded men, whose spiritual Egos have perished, that appear in the séance-rooms and are dignified by Spiritualists with the title of "spirits of the departed."

These shells, these animal souls, in whom still survive the major portions of the intelligence, will-power, and knowledge that they possessed when incorporated in the human combination, invigorated too by the reassimilation of the spirit-vitalized matter that once combined with the spirit to compose their spiritual Ego, are often powerful and highly intelligent and continue to survive for lengthened periods, their intense desire for earthly life enabling them to seize from the decaying *simulacra* of the good and feeble the material for prolonged existence.

To those *eidolons,* Occultists are used to give the name of elementaries, and these it is that by the aid of the half-intelligent forces of nature which are attracted to them, perform most of the wonders of the séance-rooms. If to these shells, these *eidolons,* which have lost their immortality, and whence the divine essence has forever departed, our brothers, the Spiritualists, insist on applying the title of "spirits of the dead"—well and good—they are not spirits at all, they are of the earth, earthy, all that remains of the dead when their spirits have flown—but if this be understood, and it be nevertheless considered desirable to call them that to which they are the precise antitheses—it is after all merely a case of misnomer.

But let there be no mistake as to what they *are;* hundreds and thousands of lost and ruined men and women all over the globe attest the degradation to which constant subjection to their influence in mediumship, etc., too generally leads, and we who know the truth should ill discharge our duty if we did not warn all Spiritualists in the strongest terms possible, against allowing this misuse of terms to mislead them as to the real nature and character of the disembodied entities with which they so constantly and confidingly deal.

Now probably Spiritualists will admit that our views will explain the vast mass of trash, frivolous nonsense and falsehood communicated through mediums, as also the manner in which so many of these, good

and honest to begin with, gradually grow into immoral impostors. But many objections will be raised. One man will say—"I have repeatedly conversed with my late father—a better, kinder-hearted, more spiritual-minded man never lived—and on one occasion he told me a fact, unknown to me, and, I believe, to every one living, which I subsequently verified."

Nothing is simpler—the father's image was in the son's mind—thus put *en rapport,* the disembodied elementary which, if of one of the more intelligent classes, has glimpses of things in the astral light, and can here and there dimly distinguish the pictures which record every deed, word and thought (pictures which we are all unconsciously incessantly evolving, pictures which survive long after those who originated them have passed away), the elementary, we say, scanning these easily picks up sufficient facts for its purpose, and by its will materializes itself, partly out of the matter drawn from the medium's body, partly out of inert kosmic matter drawn to it by the help of the elementals or half-blind forces of nature which it, and probably the medium also, has attracted and stands forth the counterpart of the dead father and talks of things known only to that dead father. Of course, if the matter talked of were known to any present, both elementary and medium, if in a trance, could equally know it, but we have purposely supposed one of those rare cases which are considered to be the strongest proofs of "spirit identity," as it is called. Of course, too, everything that has once passed before that son's mind, intonation of voice, tricks of manner, infirmities of temper, though apparently forgotten at the moment, are really indelibly recorded in his memory, as is proved by their immediate recognition when reproduced by the elementary who has fished them out of those dormant records.

And it must be remembered that these apparently strong and perfect cases are very rare, and that the elementaries who come as A. or B., usually, if they personate people of any note, make gross blunders and almost without exception betray their falsehood in one way, or another, Shakespeare and Milton dictating trash, Newton grossly ignorant of his own *Principia,* and Plato teaching a washed-out Neoplatonism *cum* sentimental Christian philosophy, and so on. At the same time undoubtedly in rare cases the ghostly relics of very clever, very bad and very determined men constitute disembodied entities of high intelligence, which survive for a lengthened period, and the wickeder and more mate-

rial they are in all their tendencies, the longer do they escape disintegration.

The Orthodox Church is much nearer the truth when it calls the entities that are mostly dealt with in séance-rooms "devils," than are the Spiritualists who call them *Spirits*. We do not mean that they are at all generally actively malevolent, but their magnetic attractions are evil, and they incline and lead those with whom they have much to do to the same evil, material passions, which have been their own ruin.

Naturally now some Spiritualists will object that this cannot be true since despite the mass of folly and gibberish, or worse, often heard in séance-rooms, the purest sentiments and really lofty ideas and teachings are not so very rarely expressed through mediums.

Several points have, however, to be borne in mind. In the first place, though proved unfit for further development, and, therefore, doomed in most cases by the eternal law of the survival of the fittest to be disintegrated and, losing personal consciousness, to be worked up again in the lower worlds into new combinations, all elementaries are by no means actively wicked all round. On the balance, their whole natures proved to have a greater affinity to matter than to spirit, and they are, therefore, incapable of further progress, but when dealing with a pure circle and speaking through a still pure medium (very few mediums, indeed, continue this after a long course of mediumship) the better and less degraded side of their nature comes out, and it is quite possible for elementaries to have a perfect intellectual knowledge and appreciation of virtue and purity and enlightened conceptions of truth, and yet be innately vicious in their tendencies. We meet plenty of men who have a sentimental love for virtue, and yet whose lives are one unbroken course of lust and self-indulgence, and as the men were, so are the elementaries, their *reliquiae*. If we at times speak bitterly of popular modern Christianity, it is because we know that with all its other ennobling and saving tendencies just on this all-important point it leads to the destruction of myriads of souls. For it leads to the belief that it signifies little what a man does, if he only finally believes that his sins are forgiven him, and that by relying on the merits of Jesus Christ he may escape the vengeance of the Lord. But there is no anthropomorphic Lord, no vengeance, no forgiveness; there is simply the action of a natural law impressed on the universe by the Absolute—simply a question of balance of affinities, and they, whose deeds and general tendencies

are earthly, go down in the scale, rarely, very rarely, to rise again in their own identities, and those in whom these tendencies are spiritual pass upwards.

It is not, however, possible here to enter into the great questions thus glanced at, and we return to the subject of high or comparatively high, teachings through mediums.

Now it must not for a moment be supposed that all we hear from these latter comes from elementaries. In the first place, a great many well-known mediums are clever impostors. There are notorious trance mediums, especially women, who steadily work up for their so-called trance orations, and these being really clever and working at good books, deliver essays of a respectable and at times almost first-class character. There is no spiritual influence at work here, the only apparently abnormal feature in these cases is that persons possessing such fair abilities should be willing thus to prostitute them, and that people who can talk so well and touchingly of truth and purity, should yet live such lives of falsehood and immorality. Alas! *meliora videor proboque deteriora sequor,* has ever found response in too many human hearts and has in all ages rung the annihilation-knell of too many Egos.

In the second place, in the case of pure and genuine mediums, who in a trance pass entirely under the influence of their own seventh principle, the *augoeides* of the Greeks, the whole teachings come from the medium's own soul, and it is very rare to obtain thus anything higher than the medium's own intellect, when in a state of spiritual excitement, could produce.

It may be said that in many such cases, the medium says himself or herself, that it is Judge Edmonds, or the late Bishop of _____, etc., that is teaching him or her, but this is merely due to the intervention of mischievous elementaries who are always crowding about every medium, and who, if he is too pure to enable them to get command over him, yet, ever anxious to get a finger in every pie, confuse and deceive him. Only an adept can clearly and consciously place the spiritual Ego wholly under the domination of the Spirit. Mediums who in trances, unconsciously succeed in doing this, are unaware of the source whence they derive their perceptions and can be made to believe by any elementary exerting any influence over them, through any weak point in their character, that these are derived from it. The same, though in a minor degree, is the case with those rare, high, because specially pure,

mediums, whose Ego and Spirit can soar together, when the rest of the combination is in a trance, into the astral light, and there can read all the highest thoughts that man has ever thought. True, the Ego of the highest and best mediums can reproduce in this material world only in a fragmentary and confused manner what it reads in the astral light, but still even this dim reproduction is sometimes of a character far transcending the capacities of the medium and all those present. How it comes that the thoughts thus fished up like pearls out of the astral light come often to be attributed by the medium to spirits we have already explained.

But an even more common source of inspiration of mediums, is the mind of one or more of those present. When in a trance, the spiritual soul (the sixth and seventh principles), can read all that is recorded in the mind or memory of those towards whom it is in any way attracted, and the medium's utterances will in such cases be quite up to the highest standard of those with whom it is thus *en rapport,* and if these are pure, highly cultivated persons, the teachings thus received will be equally pure and intellectual. But here again the unconscious medium as a whole does not know whence its perceptions are being derived. In its spiritual soul it knows no doubt, but in its combination with the other principles—a combination necessary for the writing or speaking of those perceptions—it is quite in the dark and can be impressed by any elementary, of sufficient force, at hand, with any conception in regard to this point that it chooses to convey.

In truth, mediumship is a dangerous, too often a fatal capacity, and if we oppose Spiritualism, as we have ever consistently done, it is not because we question the reality of their phenomena, which, we know, can and do occur (despite the multitudes of fraudulent imitations) and which our adepts can reproduce at will without danger to *themselves,* but because of the irreparable spiritual injury (we say nothing of the mere physical sufferings) which the pursuit of Spiritualism inevitably entails on nine-tenths of the mediums employed. We have seen scores, nay rather hundreds of, so to say, good, pure, honest young men and women, who but for the cultivation of this evil capacity for the reception of impressions by elementaries, might, and would in all probability, have lived lives, leading to higher things, but who through the gradual pernicious influence of these low, earth-bound natures have sunk, from bad to worse, ending, often prematurely, lives that could lead but to

spiritual ruin.

These are no speculations—we speak that we do know—and if one in five mediums, who habitually exercise their capacity, escape the doom that overtakes so many, these exceptions cannot justify the Spiritualists in aiding and abetting the crowd of professional mediums who gamble away their immortality with the lower material influences. The practice of mediumship for good purposes, at rare intervals, by virtuous mediums, intermediately ever careful to strengthen their moral and spiritual natures, by pure lives and holy aspirations, is one thing, and the habitual practice, in a worldly, careless, undevout spirit, for gain is another, and this latter cannot be too strongly denounced alike in the highest interests of the mediums and of the sitters who employ them.

"Evil communications corrupt good manners" is an eternal truth, trite and hackneyed though it be, and no evil communications are so evil as those subtle influences, that radiate from the low, bestial elementaries who crowd the séance-rooms of immoral, or more or less demoralized, mediums, too weak and low to make themselves heard or seen, but strong enough in their intensely material tendencies, to diffuse a moral poison into the mental atmosphere of all present.

That men bewildered amidst the crumbling ruins of *effete* religions should madly grasp at every clue by which there seems some faint hope of penetrating the cloud-shrouded labyrinth of the mystery of the universe, is neither wonderful nor reprehensible, but it is not through mediums, the prey of every idle spook and elementary that the great truth is to be reached, but by that rigorous course of study, self-discipline and self-purification which is taught in the temple of Occultism to which Theosophy is, in the present day, the high road.

But we digress. Whether he accepts our explanations or not (and *we* KNOW that they are true) our correspondent will, we believe, admit that in what we have written we have explained according to our philosophy, not only the particular instances he quotes, but at the same time the *modus occurrendi* of most of the phenomena of the séance-room, and though in doing this we have glanced at numberless subjects of the highest importance requiring much further explanation, we have already so far exceeded the space usually allotted to such disquisitions, that we must, however unwillingly, close, for the present, this interesting discussion.

THE ORIGINAL PROGRAMME

III

TO continue: the charges wind up with the following remarks, so profound, that it requires a deeper head than ours to fathom all that underlies the words contained in them. "Is the T.S. a Brotherhood or not?" queries the plaintiff—"If the former, is it possible to have any *centre of arbitrary power?*[1] To hold that there is necessity for such a centre is only a roundabout way of saying that no Brotherhood is possible,[2] but in point of fact *that necessity itself is by no means* proved [!?]. There have been no doubt Brotherhoods under high Masters. . . ." [there "have been" and *still are.* H.P.B.] "but in such cases the Masters were never elected for *geographical* or other considerations [?]. The natural leader of men was always recognised by his embodying the spirit of Humanity. To institute comparisons would be little short of blasphemy. The greatest among men is always the readiest to serve and yet is unconscious of the service. Let us pause before finally tying the millstone of worldliness around the neck of Theosophy. Let us not forget that Theosophy does not grow in our midst *by force and control* but by *sunshine of brotherliness* and the *dew of self-oblivion.* If we do not believe in Brotherhood and Truth let us put ashes on our head and *weep in sack-cloth* and not rejoice in the purple of authority and in the festive garments of pride and worldliness. It is by far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard, than that it should be used as the Motto of *a papal authority.*" . . .

Who, upon reading this, and being ignorant that the above piece of rhetorical flowers of speech is directed against the luckless Pres't Founder—would not have in his "mind's eye"—an Alexander Borgia, a Caligula, or to say the least—General Booth in his latest metamorphosis! When, how, or by doing what, has our goodnatured, unselfish, ever kind President merited such a Ciceronian tirade? The state of things denounced exists now for almost twelve years, and our accuser knew of it and even took an active part in its organisation, Conventions, Coun-

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NOTE.—This portion of a manuscript article by Mme. Blavatsky was first published in *The Theosophist,* August, 1924 and reprinted in THEOSOPHY, April and May, 1950.

[1] It is the *first time* since the T.S. exists that such an accusation of *"arbitary* power," is brought forward. Not many will be found of this way of thinking.

[2] No need taking a *roundabout* way, to say that no Brotherhood would ever be possible if many theosophists shared the very original views of the writer.

cils, Rules, etc., etc., at Bombay, and at Adyar. This virulent *sortie* is no doubt due to "SELF-CULTURE"? The critic has outgrown the Movement and turned his face from the original programme; hence his severity. But where is the *true theosophical charity,* the tolerance and the *"sunshine of brotherliness"* just spoken of, and so insisted upon?

Verily—it is easy to preach the "dew of self-oblivion" when one has nothing to think about except to evolve such finely rounded phrases; were every theosophist at Adyar to have his daily wants and even comforts, his board, lodging and all, attended to by a wealthier theosophist; and were the same "sunshine of brotherliness" to be poured upon him, as it is upon the critic who found for himself an endless brotherly care, a fraternal and self-sacrificing devotion in two other noble-minded members, then—would there be little need for the President Founder to call upon and humble himself before our theosophists. For, if he has to *beg* for 2 annual shillings—it is, in order that those—Europeans and Hindus—who work night and day at Adyar, giving their services free and receiving little thanks or honour for it, should have at least *one meal a day.* The fresh "dew of *self*-oblivion" must not be permitted to chill one's heart, and turn into the lethal *mold of forgetfulness* to such an extent as that. The severe critic seems to have lost sight of the fact that for months, during the last crisis, the whole staff of our devoted Adyar officers, from President down to the youngest brother in the office, have lived on 5d. a day each, having reduced their meals to the *minimum.* And it is *this mite,* the proceeds of the "2 shill. contribution," conscientiously paid by some, that is now called *extortion,* a desire to live "in the purple of authority and the festive garments of pride and worldliness"!

Our "Brother" is right. Let us "weep in sack cloth and ashes on our head" if the T.S. has many more such *unbrotherly* criticisms to bear. Truly "it would be far better that the name of Theosophy should never be heard than that it should be used as a motto"—not of *papal authority* which exists nowhere at Adyar outside the critic's imagination—but as a motto of a "self-developed fanaticism." All the great services otherwise rendered to the Society, all the noble work done by the complainant will pale and vanish before such an appearance of cold-heartedness. Surely he cannot desire the *annihilation* of the Society? And if he did it would be useless: the T.S. *cannot be destroyed as a body.* It is not in the power of either Founders or their critics; and neither friend nor enemy can

ruin that which is *doomed to exist,* all the blunders of its leaders notwithstanding. That which was generated through and founded by the "High Masters" and under their authority if not their instruction—MUST AND WILL LIVE. Each of us and all will receive his or her *Karma* in it, but the *vehicle* of Theosophy will stand indestructible and undestroyed by the hand of whether man or fiend.

No; "truth does not depend on show of hands"; but in the case of the much abused President-Founder it must depend on the show of *facts.* Thorny and full of pitfalls was the steep path he had to climb up alone and unaided for the first years. Terrible was the opposition [from] outside the Society he had to build—sickening and disheartening the treachery he often encountered within the Head Quarters. Enemies around gnashing their teeth in his face, those whom he regarded as his staunchest friends and co-workers betraying him and the Cause on the slightest provocation. Still, where hundreds in his place would have collapsed and given up the whole undertaking in despair, he, unmoved and unmovable, went on climbing up and toiling as before, unrelenting and undismayed, supported by that one thought and conviction that he was doing his duty. What other inducement has the Founder ever had, but his theosophical pledge and the sense of his duty toward THOSE he had promised to serve to the end of his life? There was but one beacon for him—the hand that had first pointed to him his way up: the hand of the MASTER he loves and reveres so well, and serves so devotedly though occasionally, perhaps, unwisely. As President elected for life, he has nevertheless offered more than once to resign in favour of any one found worthier than him, but was never permitted to do so by the majority—not of "show of hands" but *show of hearts,* literally,—as few are more beloved that he is even by most of those, who may criticize occasionally his actions. And this is only natural: for, cleverer in administrative capacities, more learned in philosophy, subtler in casuistry, in metaphysics or daily life policy, there may be many around him; but the whole globe may be searched through and through and no one found stauncher to his friends, truer to his word, or more devoted to real, practical theosophy—than the President-Founder; and these are the chief requisites in a leader of such a movement—one that aims to become a Brotherhood of men. The Society needs no Loyolas; it has to shun anything approaching casuistry; nor ought we to tolerate too subtle casuists. There, where every individual has to work out his own Karma,

the judgment of a casuist who takes upon himself the duty of pronouncing upon the state of a brother's soul, or of guiding his conscience, is of no use, and may become positively injurious. The Founder claims no more rights than every one else in the Society: the *right of private judgment,* which, whenever it is found to disagree with Branches or individuals is quietly set aside and *ignored—as shown by the complainants themselves.*

This, then, is the sole crime of the would-be culprit, and no worse than this can be laid at his door. And yet what is the reward of that kind man? He, who has never refused a service, outside what he considers his official duties—to any living being; he who has redeemed dozens of men, young and old, from dissipated, often immoral lives and saved others from terrible scrapes by giving them a safe refuge in the Society; he, who has placed others again, on the pinnacle of Saintship *through their status in that Society,* when otherwise they would have indeed found themselves now in the meshes of "worldliness" and perhaps worse;—he, that true friend of every theosophist, and verily "the readiest to serve and as unconscious of the service"—he is now taken to task for what?—for insignificant blunders, for useless "special orders," a *childish,* rather than untheosophical love of display, out of pure devotion to his Society.

Is, then, *human nature* to be viewed so uncharitably by us, as to call *untheosophical,* worldly and sinful the natural impulse of a mother to dress up her child and parade it to the best advantages? The comparison may be laughed at, but if it is, it will be only by him who would, like the fanatical Christian of old, or the naked, dishevelled Yogi of India—have no more charity for the smallest human weakness. Yet, the simile is quite correct, since the Society is the child, the beloved creation of the Founder; he may be well forgiven for this too exaggerated love for that which he had suffered and toiled more than all other theosophists put together. He is called "worldly," "ambitious of power" and *untheosophical* for it. Very well; let then any impartial judge compare the life of the Founder with those of most of his critics, and see which was *the most theosophical,* ever since the Society sprang into existence. If no better results have been achieved, it is not the President who ought to be taken to task for it, but the Members themselves, as he has been ever trying to promote its growth, and the majority of the "Fellows" have either done nothing, or created obstacles in the way of its progress

through sins of omission as of commission. Better unwise *activity,* than an overdose of too wise *inactivity,* apathy or indifference which are always the death of an undertaking.

Nevertheless, it is the members who now seek to sit in Solomon's seat; and they tell us that the Society is useless, its President positively mischievous, and that the Head-Quarters ought to be done away with, as "the organization called Theosophical *presents many features seriously obstructive to the progress of Theosophy.*" Trees, however, have to be judged by their fruits. It was just shown that no "special orders" issuing from the "Centre of Power" called Adyar, could affect in any way whatever either Branch or individual; and therefore any theosophist bent on "self culture," "self-involution" or any kind of *selfness,* is at liberty to do so; and if, instead of using his rights he will apply his brain-power to criticize other people's actions then it is he who becomes the *obstructionist* and not at all the "Organization called Theosophical." For, if theosophy is anywhere practised on this globe, it is at Adyar, at the Head-Quarters. Let "those interested in the progress of true theosophy" appealed to by the writers look around them and judge. See the Branch Societies and compare them with the group that works in that "Centre of Power." Admire the "progress of theosophy" at Paris, London and even America. Behold, in the great "Brotherhood," a true *Pandemonium* of which the Spirit of Strife and Hatred himself might be proud! Everywhere—quarrelling, fighting for supremacy; backbiting, slandering, scandal-mongering for the last two years; a veritable battlefield, on which several members have so disgraced themselves and their Society by trying to disgrace others, that they have actually become more like hyenas than human beings by digging into the graves of the past, in the hopes of bringing forward old forgotten slanders and scandals!

At Adyar alone, at the Head-Quarters of the Theosophical Society, the Theosophists are that which they ought to be everywhere else: *true theosophists* and not merely *philosophers* and Sophists. In that *centre* alone are now grouped together the few solitary, practically working Members, who labour and toil, quietly and uninterruptedly, while those Brothers for whose sake they are working, sit in the *dolce far niente* of the West and criticise them. Is this "true theosophical and brotherly work," to advise to put down and disestablish the only "centre" where real brotherly, humanitarian work is being accomplished?

"Theosophy first, and organization after." Golden words, these. But where would Theosophy be heard of now, had not its Society been organised before its spirit and a desire for it had permeated the whole world? And would Vedanta and other Hindu philosophies have been ever taught and studied in England outside the walls of Oxford and Cambridge, had it not been for that organization that fished them like forgotten pearls out of the Ocean of Oblivion and Ignorance and brought them forward before the profane world? Nay, kind Brothers and critics, would the Hindu exponents of that sublime philosophy themselves have ever been known outside the walls of Calcutta, had not the Founders, obedient to the ORDERS received, forced the remarkable learning and philosophy of those exponents upon the recognition of the two most civilized and cultured centres of Europe—London and Paris?

Verily it is easier *to destroy* than to build. The words "untheosophical" and "unbrotherly" are ever ringing in our ears; yet, truly theosophical acts and words are not to be found in too unreasonable a superabundance among those who use the reproof the oftener. However insignificant, and however *limited the line* of good deeds, the latter will have always more weight than empty and vainglorious talk, and will be *theosophy,* whereas theories without any practical realisation are at best philosophy. Theosophy is an all-embracing Science; many are the ways leading to it, as numerous in fact as its definitions, which began by the sublime, during the day of Ammonius Saccas, and ended by the ridiculous—in Webster's Dictionary. There is no reason why our critics should claim the right for themselves alone to *know* what is theosophy and to define it. There were theosophists and Theosophical Schools for the last 2,000 years, from Plato down to the mediaeval Alchemists, who knew the value of the term, it may be supposed. Therefore, when we are told that "The question is not whether the T.S. *is doing good,* but whether it is doing *that kind of good which is entitled to the name of Theosophy*"—we turn round and ask: "And who is to be the judge in this mooted question?" We have heard of one of the greatest Theosophists who ever lived, who assured his audience that whosoever *gave a cup of cold water to a little one* in his [Theosophy's] name, would have a greater reward than all the learned Scribes and Pharisees. "Woe to the world because of offences!"

Belief in the Masters was never made an article of faith in the T.S. But for its Founders, the commands received from Them when it was

established have ever been sacred. And this is what one of them wrote in a letter preserved to this day:—

"Theosophy must not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical Ethics epitomized in theoretical dissertations. Theosophy must be made practical, and has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless discussion. . . . It has to find objective expression in an all-embracing code of life thoroughly impregnated with its spirit—the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity and love. Its followers have to set the example of a firmly outlined and as firmly applied morality before they get the right to point out, even in a spirit of kindness, the absence of a like ethic Unity and singleness of purpose in other associations and individuals. As said before—no Theosophist should blame a brother whether within or outside of the association, throw slur upon his actions or denounce him[3] lest he should himself lose the right of being considered a theosophist. Ever turn away your gaze from the imperfections of your neighbor and centre rather your attention upon your own shortcomings in order to correct them and become wiser. . . . Show not the disparity between claim and action in another man but—whether he be brother or neighbor—rather help him in his arduous walk in life. . . .

"The problem of true theosophy and its great mission is the working out of clear, unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties which would satisfy most and best the altruistic and right feeling in us; and the modeling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life where they may be applied with most equitableness . . . Such is the common work in view for all who are willing to act on these principles. It is a laborious task and will require strenuous and persevering exertion, but it must lead you insensibly to progress and leave no room for any selfish aspirations outside the limits traced. . . . Do not indulge in unbrotherly comparisons between the task accomplished by yourself and the work left undone by your neighbor or brother, in the field of Theosophy, *as none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him.* . . . Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to, and dealt with justly by KARMA alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathizing individual may help you

[3] It is in consequence of this letter that Art. XII was adopted in *Rules* and a fear of lacking the charity prescribed, that led so often to neglect its enforcement.

magnetically. . . . You are the Free-workers in the Domain of Truth, and as such, must leave no obstructions on the paths leading to it." . . . [The letter closes with the following lines which have now become quite plain, as they give the key to the whole situation] . . . *"The degrees of success or failure are the landmark we shall have to follow, as they will constitute the barriers placed with your own hands between yourselves and those whom you have asked to be your teachers. The nearer your approach to the goal contemplated—the shorter the distance between the student and the Master."* . . .

A complete answer is thus found in the above lines to the paper framed by the two Theosophists. Those who are now inclined to repudiate the Hand that traced it and feel ready to turn their backs upon the whole Past and the original programme of the T.S. are at liberty to do so. The Theosophical body is neither a Church or a Sect and every individual opinion is entitled to a hearing. A Theosophist may progress and develop, and his views may outgrow those of the Founders, grow larger and broader in every direction, without for all that abandoning the fundamental soil upon which they were born and nurtured. It is only he who changes diametrically his opinions from one day to another and shifts his devotional views from white to black—who can be hardly trusted in his remarks and actions. But surely, this can never be the case of the two Theosophists who have now been answered. . . .

Meanwhile, peace and fraternal good will to all.

H. P. BLAVATSKY
Corres. Sec'ty, T.S.

Ostende, Oct. 3rd, 1886

KEEPING IN TOUCH

The Karma of those who could, but *will not* subscribe for the organs of their Society, whether from indifference or any other cause, *is their own;* but the duty of keeping all the Fellows in touch with us, and *au courant* with Theosophical events—is ours. For, many of those who being virtually cut off from almost everything that goes on in the Theosophical centres, lose very soon their interest in the movement and continue henceforward "Fellows" but in name.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY: "Why the 'Vahan'?"

THE REQUIREMENTS OF KARMA

SINCE it is demonstrable that no doctrinal approximation of an eternal verity can withstand the human tendency to distort, misinterpret, or oversimplify, we must expect to discover inadequacies in numerous conventional conceptions of karma. Generally speaking, a popular presentation of karma becomes an insistence upon retribution—brought about by one's self, to be sure, but a sort of mechanical throwing back into our faces of those ill-motivated actions which we have thrown "out" in the direction of other beings. In *The Dhammapada,* many of the cantos deal in Buddha's words with the psychology of retribution, and it has been possible for a great number of Buddhists, as well as Western scholars, to forget two crucial sentences which appear at the outset of the first chapter:

> In this world never is enmity appeased by hatred; enmity is ever appeased by Love. This is the Law Eternal.

The implications of this principle are more specific than one may realize, for this is not simply a moral counsel. Buddha quite apparently intended to give an account of the *way karma works.* If we equate this fundamental principle with the idea of retribution, we arrive at some interesting paradoxes: consider, for example, a man who inflicts a serious physical injury on another when under the spell of covetousness or anger. Does this mean that the offender must suffer a similar injury? He may indeed so suffer, but the mere fact of his suffering need have no effect whatsoever upon his motivations and attitudes.

We are all aware of the fact that the eye-for-an-eye and tooth-for-a-tooth theory of moral adjustment is not the only method there is—nor even the best one. The man who offends because of covetousness or anger needs to acquire better motives. The full expression of karma is only possible when one's motivations and actions have eventually been met in a manner which has educational consequences. But this means that a bestial man can conceivably learn to control his bestiality because of association with a good and kindly person for a period of years, and whether or not "retribution" for injurious actions had been experienced.

The question next arises as to whether it is just for a transformation of nature to take place without the prompting of suffering. This prob-

lem is well put by C. J. Ducasse in *Nature, Mind, and Death,* during his concluding discussion of the doctrine of karma:

> If, for example, impatience caused Tom to do Dick an injury, the morally important thing as regards Tom is that he should acquire the patience he lacks; but the undergoing by him of a similar injury at the hand of Dick is not the only possible way in which he could come to do so. Indeed, it would contribute to this only in proportion as Dick's retaliation were prompt and were known to be retaliation for the injury resulting from Tom's impatience. Other ways in which Tom might learn patience are conceivable. He might, for example, eventually find himself in a situation psychologically conducive to the development of patience—one, for example, where his love for someone would cause him to endure year after year without resentment the vagaries or follies of the loved person—or, more generally, some situation which for one reason or another he would be powerless to alter or to escape and in which only patient resignation would avail to bring him any peace.
>
> As regards Dick, on the other hand, compensation for his unmerited injury at the hand of Tom need not consist in the immoral pleasure of retaliation upon Tom. The injury, which as such robs him of certain powers or opportunities, might lead him to develop other and more significant capacities latent in him, or might awaken him to other and better opportunities of which he would otherwise have remained unaware. Compensation for injury can be paid in various kinds of coin, and can truly compensate no matter at whose hands the payment comes; and, on the side of the doer of injury, the ends of justice are truly served if the wages of vice turn out to be eventual virtues.

One might also reflect that the help of the strongest and greatest of characters is often needed to achieve a transformation of perspective in those of distorted personality. This is, after all, the story of the "saviours," those of whom legends in every land tell, the Buddhas and "Christs" who are able to sense that even the "thief" may be "lifted up into paradise." Then there is the question of the retribution for those who, previous to their "enlightenment," have committed persistent wrongs against their fellows. One has the intuitive feeling that a kind of punishment or retribution must take place, that "held-over" karma must operate long after one has ceased initiating bad causes. The man who has truly transcended destructive motivations will doubtless sense his own karmic obligations. The man who has wronged another and has truly become aware of the wrong done will, from the higher standpoint acquired, waste no time in flagellating himself for previous

wrong-doing, but will seek for means to help the injured person. Carried across the perspective of numerous lifetimes, such a feeling of obligation may have no conscious focus, yet the basic attitude may enable such a man to pick up the threads of the past, to right with diligence the psychological effects of past unkindnesses.

"THE WORLD MOVES IN CYCLES"

If you would really help the noble cause—you must do so now: for, *a few years more and your, as well as our, efforts will be in vain.* The world moves in cycles, which proceed under the impetus of two mutually antagonistic and destroying Forces, the one striving to move Humanity onward, toward Spirit, the other forcing Mankind to gravitate downward, into the very abysses of matter. It remains with men to help either the one or the other. Thus, also, it is our present task, as Theosophists, to help in one or the other direction. We are in the very midst of the Egyptian darkness of *Kali-yuga,* the "Black Age," the first 5,000 years of which, its dreary first cycle, is preparing to close on the world between 1897 and 1898. Unless we succeed in placing the T.S. before this date on the safe side of the spiritual current, it will be swept away irretrievably into the Deep called "Failure," and the cold waves of oblivion will close over its doomed head. Thus will have ingloriously perished the *only* association whose aims, rules and original purposes answer in every particular and detail—if strictly carried out—to the innermost, fundamental thought of every great Adept Reformer, the beautiful dream of a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY: "Why the 'Vahan'?"

THE EFFECT OF INFLUENCES

HAVE the cosmic and so-called "planetary" influences any particular bearing on our human lives? Do we exist apart from any forms of external governance as the rulers of our own destiny? There may exist two schools of thought in respect to the problem, both representing extremes. One is an acknowledgment of certain types of "influences" within astrological limits; the other outright denial. Still a third voice, that of students, may be said to represent not a compromise admission between the two, but rather an admission that the subject is almost too great for human thought to compass. There is probably a safe line to hold to in this, as in all related questions concerning man's cosmic relationships: that of the Hermetic axiom, "As above, so below." Some sort of relationship to which mind is susceptible is thus always established.

It is likely that the self-guided man prefers to think of himself as uninfluenced, neither party to nor prey to external conditions and forces. And why may this *not* be true, in one's own degree? Yet, apparently, this touches the real nature of the problem of influences in minor part only. For it is true that human consciousness occupies generally only a small orbit, concerned mainly with the aspects of daily existence and the overcoming and neutralizing of these effects by one or another method. But what of those portions of human life which are not so apparent, having to do with the little known powers of the astral, the psychic, the higher manasic, and still other metaphysical and purely occult divisions of man's nature? Whence do they take their origins, and what are their relationships with the invisible influences which radiate eternally so long as Eternal Mind "wakes"?

Though it is true that influences are properties without forms tangible to the senses, it is taught that they are *substance.* For instance, Dr. Richardson is quoted in *The Secret Doctrine* on the influence exerted by sun-force, by which all things certainly are affected—a force which may augment the volume of bodies, or, by its abstraction or absence, reduce their volume. Further, nothing on earth may restrain the influence of this emanation which fills every point of our solar system; it passes by radiation through the most perfect vacuum and exerts "those forces seen in volcanoes and the explosion of gunpowder." If it is the astral fluid of the Kabalists, and the seven solar rays, what, after

all, *could* contain or restrain this substance? The same being the source of our terrestrial life in every sense, mankind is certainly subject to this "influence."

Again, the influences attributed to the moon are found in popular, as well as in occult, teaching, and her influences seen in every walk and phase of life on the globe. Many can attest from personal observation to the peculiar influences exerted on some human temperaments during certain lunar phases. The moon is the sidereal regulator of generation and gestation; but the planets likewise exert moral and physical influences known fully only to those Beings who have attained to perfect knowledge. Behind all, perhaps, are the influences of the Zodiac on all phases and aspects of life, cosmic, human, and terrestrial. "Numbers," says H. P. B., "unveil to him who studies the secrets of Nature, a truly divine System, an *intelligent* plan in Cosmogony, which results in natural cosmic divisions of time, seasons, invisible influences, astronomical phenomena, with their action and reaction on terrestrial and even moral nature; on birth and death and growth; on health and disease." The highest INFLUENCES, the superior hierarchies of cosmos, it is taught, "have sprung into being under the quickening influence of the uncreated beam, the reflection of the great Central Sun that radiates on the shores of the river of Life. . . ."

In our ordinary human life as known to this planet, the subject of influences can be pursued in whatever direction one undertakes. In times past it was believed that influences of a quite deleterious kind attached themselves to diseases, and had to be exorcised (mesmerized?) before the sufferer could be healed. This theory may not hold good today in medical science; but who can say that in the future it *may* not see reason behind the superstition of such "substantial" entities accompanying mental or physical disorders? Theosophy lays down the law that our thoughts, as they leave the brain, are molded into subtle forms of matter or substance, called "elemental," and under cyclic law return to the generator, sometimes bringing in train "seven devils worse than themselves"! It is common knowledge, too, that drugs possess their own peculiar influences, which unfold in cyclic periods and produce innumerable symptoms which are likewise the cause of influences. Plant life is known to be regulated by sun and moon; even the hours of transit of these celestial bodies having their separate and distinct rays of influence, one causing a flower to open, another, to close its petals.

Concerning all these matters, Theosophy asserts that "almost nothing is known of the laws of magnetism and other imponderable agents; almost nothing of their effects upon our bodies and minds. And even that which is known and moreover perfectly demonstrated, is attributed to chance and coincidence." Theosophy further points to the fact of times of epidemics in moral as well as physical affairs. In one epoch "the spirit of religious controversy will centre around the most ferocious passions of which human nature is susceptible, provoking mutual persecution, bloodshed, and wars; at another, an epidemic of resistance to constituted authority will spread over half the world (as in the year 1848), rapid and simultaneous as the most virulent bodily disorder."

It is thus quite reasonable to believe that influences are of many kinds; there are those totally unknown to us in our present state of evolutionary knowledge; others partly known or suspected. In addition are those which are man-made, which are not in the scheme of Law, but apparently somehow necessary to human experience. These various influences, which produce the aberrations of suffering, are well known to all, and not denied by any. And "the less power of resistance for astral influences a person possesses," says Paracelsus, "the more will he be subject to such influences."

"Attractive Power in the Soul"

There is an attractive power in the soul of man, which attracts physical, mental, and moral diseases from the Chaos. The planetary influences extend through all Nature, and man attracts poisonous qualities from the moon, from the stars, and from other things. But the moon, and the stars, and other things also attract evil influences from man, and distribute them again by their rays—because Nature is an undivided whole, whose parts are intimately connected. The sun and the stars attract something from us, and we attract something from them, because our astral bodies are in sympathy with the stars, and the stars are in sympathy with our astral bodies. The same is the case with the astral bodies of all other objects. They all attract astral influences from the stars.

—Hartmann: *Paracelsus*

YOUTH-COMPANIONS ASK— AND ANSWER

IS it possible to understand another's experience without having gone through it ourselves? That is, can we get the value from an experience merely by observing its effect on another person? If so, does this mean that we have probably had a similar experience either in this life or a previous one?

(*a*) It is probably safe to say that at our stage we cannot understand another's experience unless we have gone through something similar in our own lives. Understanding another's experience isn't really learning, we might say. It is rather remembering. We relate the other's experience to something similar in our own experience which strikes a responsive chord—responsive to something we already *know.*

We become aware of this fact in reverse, as it were, through the lack of understanding that we ourselves met in others toward a troubling problem of our own. A response like "keep your chin up" is worse than none when practical help is needed and is but the superficial response of one who has not *related* our experience to his own.

If, then, understanding another's experience represents memory of what we already know, how are we to expend our power and range of understanding to include greater areas? It is said that we learn through experience *and* observation, and also that all Egos have been through all types of experience. Therefore, any present lack of understanding cannot be due to lack of experience, but perhaps to past failures to transmute that experience into Knowledge *through observation.* Observation, here, connotes a conscious awareness of all the factors involved in a situation and an effort to find their meaning. The habit of observation, developed as an *attitude* toward our own daily experiences, would no doubt reveal many mysteries in the very things we usually take for granted. William Q. Judge advised students to seek *meaning* in everything. If we could do this, our lives would be not merely a series of *events,* but a harvest of true Experience. Thus it must be that the Ego discovers his own Knowledge as the basis of his understanding of "others' woes."

(*b*) One might answer both Yes and No to this question, for it is the psychological difficulties which "hang us up" in an experience. But while psychological orientation is different in every person, yet, at the

same time, there are basic principles which apply to everyone. Since each human entity is unique in itself, bringing something of its own to bear upon a given situation, one could say that No, we cannot understand another's experience unless placed in exactly the same situation. On the other hand, since we all are "men," with feelings, thoughts, and minds, and have lived and experienced for eons of time, and since "there is nothing new under the sun," one might say that Yes, it *is* possible to understand another's experience without going through it personally, because we all have basically the same tools with which to live and basically similar problems.

We might approach the question from still another angle, however. What does it mean to "understand" something? The beginning of understanding is being able to be in sympathy with the problem. It is possible for some people to have incarnations in which they are either beyond, or still another possibility, literally "cut off" from, the possibility of becoming involved in certain psychological or physical difficulties. The former must have, at some previous time, experienced what was necessary in that particular situation and gathered to himself the essentials of the problem.

In one sense, this orderly sort of progression would be a very nice way to live through incarnations—somewhat like a school wherein you go to Grade One until the lessons are learned, then those lessons are applied in Grade Two, and so forth. But unfortunately most of us live our lives at the psychic level rather than the manasic; thus *reacting* to situations, rather than figuring them out.

Although Theosophy does not give one a set "Code of Ethics" to follow, yet there are principles from which the student may extract his own rules for disciplined contemplation. One does not need to adopt the attitude that it is necessary to experience *everything* in order to truly understand, for this misses the point completely. The point seems to be to meet whatever comes with as much enthusiasm and intelligence as we at present have at hand, realizing that we *don't* know everything yet can be on the right track if we use impartially what knowledge and intelligence is ours.

"BURSTING THROUGH THE GLOOM"

THE moment any aspiring individual becomes a student of the occult and, in this light, takes the position of "striver for perfection," two sets of opposing forces press upon his attention and demand a hearing. These are the external and the internal, the centripetal and the centrifugal—the former working from without within, the latter proceeding from the center, which is the man himself. The mistake made by most seekers after wisdom is to suppose that either of these two forces has any power in itself. Both are absolutely neutral. The external force, proceeding from without within and masquerading behind events, circumstances, and people, is a "fixed, unvarying quality," having no reality apart from the disposition, or the Karma, of the experiencer. The internal, having its root in the Divine Ego seated in the heart of every human being, is likewise neutral, quiescent, and homogeneous—a purely *Laya* center—until moved into action by Will and Determination. The continuous adjustment of these two forces is the essence of all life and growth, and results finally in the upward march of the Ego.

It is an almost universal tendency among the men of this age to fluctuate between the "pairs of opposites" so-called—between pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, light and gloom. Why is it, for example, that certain days or certain weeks of our lives seem to be filled with trial and hardship, while others are filled with joy? Why is it that something someone says or does, or some circumstance or event, possesses the power to completely upset one's balance, leading oftentimes to strife? Why may the mere presence of one particular individual in a gathering serve to throw another into a rage? The answer usually given to these questions is based on the *externals*—the days, the events, the people —anything and everything that tends to relieve the perceiver of his own responsibility for necessary calm and adjustment, and for freeing his innate Divine Will.

Many and varied are the manners in which otherwise normal people permit the external factors of life to determine their courses of conduct. Countless are the ways in which we allow *Mara* (Satan), or the lower human mind, to interpret events, to distort meanings, and thus throw up clouds of despair. For is it not clear that if the actions of one person have the power to fill another with indignation or revenge (both of

which feelings imply loss of control), the fault lies with the latter, not the former? Is it not apparent that if dark, cloudy days possess the power to evoke in us a state of gloom, it is only indicative of a need, on the part of ourselves, to look within and not without, to learn to live and be guided by the inner spiritual light which flickers not? If circumstances possess the power to get one down, it does no good to blame the circumstances. It is far wiser, according to the wisdom of the ages, to search within one's self for the weaknesses that make such disturbances possible. And the attempts made by some individuals to avoid unpleasant experiences by running away from them are of no ultimate avail—for the cause of the unpleasantness is within themselves, not outside. It is only by inner control, by adjustment of the internal to the external, and the external to the internal, by seeing the relationship between events and the feelings which they evoke, that true balance and contentment may be obtained.

As a rule, men merely *go through* events, accepting as joy whatever of the experience is in accord with their own acquired dispositions; as sorrow, whatever is not. Few individuals are sufficiently lighted by the *manasic* fire to see the opportunities locked up in circumstances and to use the occasion for an act of Will, to make the inner adjustment that is essential to all true progress. Nor would it be true to say that men are totally disinclined to change, for they are not. All wish for adjustment, but the adjustment most men seek to achieve is that of the *outer*. We would like to adjust external relations to fit our own internal dispositions! Yet, why should any human being be so presumptuous as to suppose that the world would be a better place in which to live if all things, events, and people could be made to conform to him and his desires? Thomas à Kempis is credited with saying that "man proposes, but God *dis*poses," which evidently means that the only relations over which human beings have unfettered control are the internal, those of the god within. It is to these internal biases that efforts towards adjustment should be directed. External adjustments are but effects, are in the hands of Karma, and will surely come of themselves—if only men do not interfere. As Mr. Judge says:

> The soul emerges from the unknown, begins to work in and with matter, is reborn again and again, makes karma, develops the six vehicles for itself, meets retribution for sin and punishment for mistake, grows strong by suffering, succeeds in bursting through the

> gloom, is enlightened by the true illumination, grasps power, retains charity, expands with love for orphaned humanity, and thenceforth helps all others who remain in darkness until all may be raised up to the place with the "Father in Heaven" who is the Higher Self.

In the course of human evolution, every individual soul must, at some point in the cycle, face the necessity of acting from within, of dispelling the veil of darkness that surrounds the race. Not even the Great Ones who have already reached the goal can be spared the discipline, once in human form, of bursting through the clouds impressed upon the astral light by the ebullitions of selfish human thought. Was not Jesus "forty days tempted of the devil," until through use of the Divine Will, Satan "departed from him for a season"? Did not H.P.B., after placing herself under the stern laws of the Lodge, laws which can be softened for no one, have to encounter "face to face" the dreaded one (the Dweller), whom she had either to "conquer—or die his victim?" "The laws which govern our Lodge," said the Master, "will not allow us to interfere with her fate . . . the final results of the dreaded ordeal depend on her and her alone." The following, written by Wm. Q. Judge, while on a visit to London, tells the same story of trial, discipline and final triumph:

> Ah, my friend, the path is dark, and now as I write, I am in the valley of the shadow, which is so horrible because I know it is not caused by my wrongdoing . . . each soul must travel and work to grow strong. This point in my career I feel is a turning point, and I hope to turn it with advantage.

It is an old saying that "the Adept becomes and is not made," and kind Nature, knowing the value of exercise and of opposition, has placed along our pathways trials that are difficult to surmount. But in providing hurdles, she has also provided aids. Why do we think that Krishna, some five thousand years ago, declared to his disciple, Arjuna, the secret of immortality, and furnished at the same time the *rules* by which alone the inner lawful warfare can be waged? Why did H. P. Blavatsky translate and annotate from the *Book of the Golden Precepts* what she called "a judicious selection" of the immemorial laws of mind and soul—a knowledge of which, she said, is obligatory in certain Eastern esoteric Schools of philosophy? Might it be because the processes of evolution are ceaseless, because there is never a moment, either of the day or night, when the student of esoteric philosophy is

not subject to attack on the mental and emotional planes of his being, and thus in need of help?

The allegorical conflict of *Kurukshetra,* symbolized in the world's great Religions as the "War in Heaven," is the battle waged in the human heart for mastery and control of the powers and faculties of mind and soul. Lower Manas, according to *The Ocean of Theosophy,* has a natural tendency to fly to a pleasant or an unpleasant idea. The question is, which shall it be? It all depends upon one's self. Unless the mind is mastered and controlled, and placed deliberately upon a subject or object of conscious choice, it is almost certain in this day and age to sink helplessly into a quagmire of gloom. But through constant recourse to the philosophical and ethical rules of manasic war, the tendency can be controlled. Unruly though it is, Lower Manas can be trained to fly to a subject of one's own choosing. The supreme master of the mind, the only master it recognizes in the human assemblage of complicated instruments, is WILL—and Will, in turn, is the servant of the Soul.

The journey through the Cycle of Necessity begins in Spirit, in the Unknown. Descending step by step into matter, the Soul becomes more and more deluded by the deceptions of the external world into which it is born. Making Karma and feeling retribution for sin and mistake, it grows strong through suffering, until, reaching the lowest point of its cycle—the veil of gloom, it re-energizes itself with a power born from within, the power of Will. The soul then succeeds, in the words of Judge, in "bursting through the gloom," literally a spiritual birth, after which illumination, power, charity and love—all attributes of the inner man—become the natural and unchanging expressions of daily life.

How can the individual who has reached inner illumination ever be cast down by events? How can the awakened *Manas* be thwarted in its determination to pursue the path of righteousness and of Soul? How can anyone who lives by the inner spiritual fire ever be misled into believing that external circumstances are the causes of his woe, or that these mayavic, ever-changing shadows have any real power in themselves? The turning point in all evolution, it might be, is the moment when a determined human being assumes command of his innate Spiritual Will, when he *bursts through the gloom* and sees the light of day, when he begins acting from within instead of ever following impulses sparked from without.

OCCULTIST VERSUS SCIENTIST

THE Adepts do not deny the nebular theory in its general propositions nor the approximate truths of the scientific hypothesis. They only deny the completeness of present theories as well as the entire error of the many so-called "exploded" old theories which, during the last century, have followed each other in such rapid succession. For instance, while denying with Laplace, Herschel and others, that the variable patches of light perceived on the nebulous background of the galaxy ever belonged to remote worlds in the process of formation, and agreeing with modern science that they proceed from no aggregation of formless matter but belong simply to clusters of "stars" already formed; they yet add that many of such clusters that pass in the opinion of the astro-physicists for stars and worlds already evoluted, are in fact but collections of the various materials made ready for future worlds. Like bricks already baked, of various qualities, shapes and colour, these seemingly adult worlds are no longer formless clay, but have become fit units for a future wall, each of them having *a fixed and distinctly assigned space* to occupy in some forthcoming building. The astronomer has no means of recognizing their relative adolescence, except perhaps by making a distinction between the star-clusters with the usual orbital motion and mutual gravitation, and those termed, we believe, irregular star-clusters of very capricious and changeful appearances. Thrown together as though at random, and seemingly in utter violation of the law of symmetry, they defy observation.

Before an emphatic contradiction of what precedes is attempted, and ridicule offered perchance, it would not seem amiss to ascertain the nature and character of those other so-called "temporary" stars whose periodicity, though never actually proved, is yet allowed to pass unquestioned. What are these stars which, appearing suddenly in matchless magnificence and splendor, disappear as mysteriously, as unexpectedly, without leaving a single trace behind? Whence do they appear? Whither are they engulfed? "In the great cosmic deep," we say.

Another point most emphatically denied by the "Adepts" is that there exists in the whole range of visible heavens any space void of starry worlds. There are stars, worlds, and systems within, as without, the systems made visible to man, and even *within our own atmosphere,*

NOTE.—Collated from standard Theosophical writings.

for all the physicist knows. The Adept affirms in this connection that orthodox, or so-called "official" science uses very often the word "infinitude" without attaching to it any adequate importance, as a flower of speech rather than a term implying an awful, a most mysterious, Reality. When an astronomer is found in his reports "gauging *infinitude,*" even the most intuitional of his class is but too often apt to forget that he is gauging only the superficies of a small area and its visible depths, and to speak of these as though they were merely the cubic contents of some known quantity. This is the direct result of the present conception of a three-dimensional space. The turn of a four-dimensional world is near, but the puzzle of science will ever continue until its concepts reach the natural dimensions of visible and invisible space—in its *septenary* completeness.

It is also necessary to know that the Adepts of the Good Law reject gravity as at present explained. They deny that the so-called "impact theory" is the only one that is tenable in the gravitation hypothesis. They say that if all efforts made by the physicists to connect it with ether in order to explain electric and magnetic distance-action have hitherto proved complete failures, it is again due to the race ignorance of the ultimate states of matter in Nature, and foremost of all of the real nature of the solar stuff. Believing but in the law of mutual magneto-electric attraction and repulsion, they agree with those who have come to the conclusion that "universal gravitation is a weak force," utterly incapable of accounting for even one small portion of the phenomena of motion. In the same connection they are forced to suggest that science may be wrong in her indiscriminate postulation of centrifugal force, which is neither a universal nor a consistent law. To cite but one instance, this force is powerless to account for the spheroidal oblateness of certain planets. For if the bulge of planetary equators and the shortening of their polar axes is to be attributed to centrifugal force, instead of being simply the result of the powerful influence of solar electro-magnetic attraction, "balanced by concentric rectification of each planet's own gravitation achieved by rotation on its axis," to use an astronomer's phraseology (neither very clear nor correct, yet serving our purpose to show the many flaws in the system), why should there be such difficulty in answering the objection that the differences in the equatorial rotation and density of various planets are directly in opposition to this theory?

The Adepts have never claimed superior knowledge of Western astronomy and other sciences. Yet turning even to the most elementary textbooks used in the schools of India, we find that the centrifugal theory of Western birth is unable to cover *all* the ground. That, unaided, it can neither account for every spheroid oblate nor explain away such evident difficulties as are presented by the relative density of some planets. How indeed can any calculation of centrifugal force explain to us, for instance, why Mercury, whose rotation is, we are told, only "about one-third that of the Earth, and its density only about one-fourth greater than the Earth," should have a polar compression *more than ten times greater than the latter?* And again, why Jupiter, whose equatorial rotation is said to be "twenty-seven times greater and its density only about one-fifth that of the Earth, should have its polar compression seventeen times greater than that of the Earth? Or why Saturn, with an equatorial velocity fifty-five times greater than Mercury for centrifugal force to contend with, should have its polar compression only *three* times greater than Mercury's? To crown the above contradictions, we are asked to believe in the "central forces" as taught by modern science, even when told that the equatorial matter of the sun, with more than four times the centrifugal velocity of the earth's equatorial surface and only about one-fourth part of the gravitation of the equatorial matter, has not manifested any tendency to bulge out at the solar equator nor shown the least flattening at the poles of the solar axis. In other and clearer words, the sun, with only one-fourth of our earth's density for the centrifugal force to work upon, has no polar compression at all!

Therefore do they say that the great men of science of the West, knowing nothing, or next to nothing, either about cometary matter, centrifugal and centripetal forces, the nature of the nebulae, or the physical constitution of the sun, stars, or even the moon, are imprudent to speak as confidently as they do about the "central mass of the sun" whirling out into space planets, comets, and what-not. Our humble opinion being wanted, we maintain that it evolutes out but the *life* principle, the *soul* of these bodies, *giving and receiving it back* in our little solar system, as the "Universal Life-giver," the One Life gives and receives it in the Infinitude and Eternity. That the Solar System is as much the microcosm of the One Macrocosm as man is the former when compared with his own little solar cosmos.

ON THE LOOKOUT

"Nature and Destiny—A Theory of Evolution"

A review in *Manas* (March 9), calling attention to the above-titled volume by Hans Christian Sandbeck, carries intimations that this book will be of considerable interest to theosophical students. (*Nature and Destiny* is published by the University of Oslo Press.) Two paragraphs of the publisher's description, for instance, run as follows:

> The author contends that idealized conceptions such as "righteous," "good," and "beautiful" are manifestations of a subconscious awareness of a *general goal* of all natural phenomena. In order to give a sensible verbalized explanation of the actual meaning of such words, it is necessary to make a clear verbal formulation of this *teleological principle.*
>
> This has been done as the main conclusion of this treatise, based upon a profound analysis of means and ends in science, art and life in general. The conclusion includes the opinion that, in view of arguments pro and contra, it appears most probable that personal consciousness is the outcome of a continuous and irreversible process, and this an everlasting—rather than a merely transient—series of phenomena.

Immortality without Theology

Mr. Sandbeck's conception of "destiny" is summed up at the close of his last chapter as the principle of "self-continuation—comprising the preservation of an identity with an ever-changing self, and the infinite expansion of such individual identity—particularly the individual consciousness." In capsule form, one could say that this statement implies the salient emphasis of the Third Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine.* Referring to this essentially philosophical approach to a conception of rebirth, *Manas* comments:

> Throughout, Sandbeck insists on a sharp distinction between religion and theology, for the field of religious experience can be held to include the totality of our "non-verbal understanding of universal relation and coherence." From this basis he approaches the question of immortality without reference to either theological doctrine or such data as collected by Dr. C. J. Ducasse in *Nature, Mind, and Death.* His underlying spirit is reminiscent of W. Macneile Dixon, and we are reminded of how Dixon liberates the question of immortality from its conventional context.

Striving for Synthesis

Mr. Sandbeck, though a competent scholar and writer, is not primarily an academic man: his profession is structural engineering and his work in philosophy and abstract science is a labor of love. Perhaps for this reason, among others, various of the Scandinavian newspaper reviewers have noted, each in his own way, what a student of H. P. Blavatsky might call the "natural Theosophy" of Sandbeck's thinking. For example, Dr. Egil Rasmussen, in a review for the *Aftenposten Chronicle,* July 7, 1959, explains Sandbeck's appeal in this way:

> Many people seem to live without an awareness of the mystery of existence. They postpone all reflection about the probable meaning of life until they may possibly find an opportunity to consider it—perhaps only at the crucial moment when they are actually facing death. Some people deliberately take refuge in some religious faith, some believe in scientific theories as the only expression of truth, and some accept as common sense the view that it is only futile to worry about problems which are insoluble, and that it is a waste of time to speculate upon a fate which is inevitable and common to all human beings.
>
> Nevertheless, it is extremely probable that most people conceal a subconscious idea of an expansion of life, and an individual fulfilment of life, beyond the apparent absolute termination of their biological existence. If this idea is merely an illusion, it is certainly one of the most invincible of human illusions.

Specialists Must Become Philosophers

A Norwegian professor, Lorentz Eckhoff, writing for the *Aarhus Stiftstidende,* August 17, 1959, sees in Sandbeck one of a number who have matured beyond compartmentalized thought and who are redefining the pure meaning of philosophy:

> The great need, the compelling necessity today is to overcome the cleavages in the world: the schisms in politics, in religion, in ethics and in science. In reality, all things and phenomena are interconnected. . . . We fancy that the world is divided into a number of very small parts or compartments, we confine ourselves in these cells and have not even the will to move out of them. That is generally the situation in politics and in science. Scientific research is divided into pigeonholes or pens. The specialists behave as Thor Heyerdahl describes in the last chapter of *Aku-aku*: they dig themselves down each in their separate ditch, deeper and deeper, until they no longer can see each other. But they carefully place their findings on the ground.

. . . There above, another kind of specialist should be ready to put the findings together.

Fortunately a few such "ground-persons"—we may call them synthetics—actually are working at some places on the Earth: Ortega y Gasset in Spain, Whitehead in England, Teilhard de Chardin and Albert Vandel in France, Lewis Mumford in America. And now we find such a "ground-man" here in Scandinavia too, the Norwegian Hans Christian Sandbeck.

"Man's Spiritual Intuitions"

It is indeed the intuitional approach to the matters discussed by Sandbeck in *Nature and Destiny,* startlingly set off against the carefully etched thinking of a trained engineer, which must appeal to many who have appreciated the book. For example, Mr. Eckhoff, in his essay on Sandbeck, is moved to say:

> Is not our understanding deliberately crippled if we exclude the idea of motive within nature? Is it reasonable to call, for instance, the neck of a giraffe—with all its biological particulars, including a sufficiently increased blood-pressure—"the outcome of chance" rather than "a design"? Is it not justified to assume, as Bergson does, a teleological, creative connection between a wish for seeing and the almost perfectly developed organ of vision? Sandbeck finds abundant reason to believe that nature in general manifests the same tendency which we directly observe in our human self—the creation, the preservation and the expansion of individual consciousness.

Natural Heritage

Three paragraphs from Mr. Sandbeck's book are illustrative of the fact that he believes all men intuitively and naturally seek a philosophy of rebirth:

> It has repeatedly been contended in this essay that people actually live as though biological death should be merely a passage into another phase of individual life, with previous experiences still recallable and the whole of personal identity unimpaired.
>
> A great majority—including *declared disbelievers* as well as *declared believers* in such an idea—exhibit a feeling of responsibility for the consequences of their actions, not only far beyond their own death, but also regardless of the very probable extinction of all earthly life at some—possibly far ahead, but certainly approaching—future date. . . .
>
> It has repeatedly been stressed in this essay that all ideas of justice and morality and all attempts at influencing other people in any other

way than that which would increase the material or biological utility of the person in question would be completely irrational if human life were really believed to be just as brief as it is known to be biologically.

UNTAUGHT ART

Two instances of artistic talent found where it might least be expected are reported in the New York *Times* for April 17:

> Of all the talented painters who appeared on the Polish scene after the political upheaval in 1956, none today is stronger or more original than an illiterate vagabond who lives on the outskirts of Krynica, near Cracow. He is known as Nikifor. He specializes in landscapes, town scenes and interiors. His work is colorful and deceptively childlike. Despite his success, Nikifor clings to the life of a vagabond and still occupies an oil-lighted hut.
>
> Nikifor, who is almost deaf and stutters, sometimes refers to himself as Matejko. He does not know how he acquired the name Nikifor or how old he is. His parentage is unknown. All that Nikifor seems to know about his past is that he has dabbled in painting since childhood. . . . Nikifor shouts, cries and struggles in his sleep. Sometimes he paints his dreams.

This case is comparable to that of Blind Tom, which Mr. Judge mentions in the *Ocean* (p. 86), among other evidences supporting reincarnation. After referring to several instances of "the appearance of genuises and great minds in families destitute of these qualities," Mr. Judge says: "But stronger yet is the case of Blind Tom, a Negro whose family could not by any possibility have a knowledge of the piano, a modern instrument, so as to transmit that knowledge to the atoms of his body, yet he had great musical power and knew the present mechanical scale on the piano."

A PSYCHIC HERITAGE

Another primitive painter who has attracted attention among professional artists is a Silesian coal miner named Ociepka who specializes in grotesque themes. According to the *Times*:

> A story goes the round about a conversation between Ociepka and a Communist party secretary who tried to convince the painter that the monsters, devils, gremlins he painted did not really exist and that he should give them up. Ociepka listened gravely and then said:
>
> "I suppose I should take your word for it, but please tell me one thing—If these gremlins don't exist, as you say, would you tell me who *are* those tiny, little bearded men with red caps I see walking about?"

"Gremlin," of course, is of comparatively recent origin, popularized by fliers in World War II. But—

> Under the general designation of fairies, and fays, the spirits of the elements appear in the myths, fables, traditions, or poetry of all nations, ancient and modern. Their names are legion—peris, devs, djins, sylvans, fauns, elves, dwarfs, trolls, norns, brownies—and many more. They have been seen, feared, blessed, banned, and invoked in every quarter of the globe and in every age. (THEOSOPHY 32:119)

YOGA—SANE, IF NOT SAFE

It would be quite a compliment to popular culture if Joe David Brown's "Yoga Comes West," in *Sports Illustrated* for Jan. 25, could be regarded as "typically American." Certainly, the appearance of an article on such a topic in a magazine devoted to sports is illustrative of a not-always-regrettable American proclivity for tackling all subjects which seem fascinating, and since this is one of the best brief articles on the topic we have seen, Mr. Brown's piece should be given its due of attention here.

"Yoga Comes West" tells an interesting story. Mr. Brown lists the number of wealthy socialites who have discovered that the simplest yoga techniques are excellent means for establishing physical self-control. Some prominent movie actors and actresses are also currently studying yoga.

A PHENOMENAL POPULARITY

Mr. Brown summarizes a surprising trend:

> Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt practiced yoga exercises for a while. Yoga got a boost from the music world when Violinist Yehudi Menuhin, an avid enthusiast, presented his *guru* (instructor) with a wristwatch inscribed, "To my best violin teacher. . . ." During the past year yoga seems to have attracted a much wider following in this country. Under its influence housewives, professors and athletes are holding their breaths and contemplating the tips of their noses. In some cities books on yoga have become bestsellers and more are being published each month. No one seems to have a satisfactory explanation for this sudden popularity, but one thing is certain: each day more Americans are discovering that yoga is the most intoxicating, the most startlingly effective and, unless precautions are taken, the most dangerous system of physical and mental training they have ever tackled.

According to the editors of *Sports Illustrated,* Mr. Brown is a "student" of both yoga theory and practice, and his own words make it

clear that his studies have not been inconsequential.

Historical Background and Perspective

Mr. Brown explains in simple language the difference between perfection of control by a "master of yoga" and the incidental exercises which filter down to the West, often from "half-taught" disciples:

> In the East yoga is rated as a science—one of the most ancient known to man. The fundamental principles of yoga were written some 2,000 years ago. They may have been practiced for as long as 6,000 years. Centuries before Western man had a thought beyond his stomach and finding a mate, Eastern sages and mystics were evolving yoga as a means of gaining mastery over their bodies and minds. Perhaps yoga always had a lunatic fringe. Certainly in modern times no other scientific discipline has attracted so many robed swamis, bearded messiahs, screwball health faddists, faith healers and just ordinary entertainers out to promote a dollar. Yet this cannot obscure the historic fact that for centuries thousands of fanatically dedicated men have spent their entire lives in solitary meditation, sometimes practicing fantastic austerities, to accumulate knowledge in yoga.
>
> As a result true yogis, *i.e.,* masters of yoga, have physical and perhaps occult powers which stagger the imagination. They will not exhibit these powers for money or to entertain the curious. To do so would defeat the purpose for which they spent long hours in acquiring the powers. Now and then, however, especially in India, it is possible to find men who have mastered some fairly advanced yoga practices and then for some reason decided to return to the everyday world.

East and West

Mr. Brown thinks that the West is modifying yoga practices as much as yoga is altering the typical outlook of those who take up the study for the first time in America. This writer's background allows him to make clear, however, that the current, somewhat casual disciples are merely walking around the edges of an occult science:

> Yoga is not a do-it-yourself system. Even in India, where each year thousands of men (and sometimes women) still turn their backs on the world and begin a dedicated study of yoga, a true aspirant attaches himself to a *guru* for training. This training may last for years, and only a few of the thousands who set out finally graduate to the master *gurus* of the Himalayas who can help them explore the upper reaches of yoga. . . .
>
> But all of this, of course, has very little to do with yoga as practiced in the West. Most yoga teachers do not believe that any amount of

training can prepare the normal modern mind in its modern surroundings to grapple with the higher aspects of yoga. Insofar as possible, they try to strip the Western brand of yoga of its mystic Eastern symbolism. Reputable yoga teachers in this country disabuse their students of any notion that they will acquire supernatural powers. After a few years of regular study they may sometimes expand their own latent physical and mental powers to a degree that amazes themselves and their friends, but this is an incidental benefit. Limbering and slimming the body is also a side effect, though admittedly it is the reason so many Americans are flocking to yoga courses.

Yoga is not a form of calisthenics, for calisthenics are designed only to engineer muscles or improve muscle tone. Yoga is a system of bodily, mental and spiritual improvement. It can be taken up for any single one of its benefits, but it should be studied as a whole.

Drug Company on the Defensive

John Lear, science editor of the *Saturday Review* reports (May 28) on a Senate subcommittee hearing at which Dr. Henry Dolger, internationally recognized authority on diabetes, was "heckled" by four drug house witnesses while trying to testify to "an undesirably high incidence of side effects experienced by diabetes patients under treatment with Diabanese (a Pfizer anti-diabetic drug that can be taken by mouth) during the same time period when Pfizer ads for Diabanese were claiming that side effects were 'virtually absent'." Since this is the third time in less than a year and a half that the Pfizer Co. has been officially cited for "misleading ads," the hearing led officers of four state medical societies to telegraph a member of the subcommittee, to express "fear of grave danger to doctor-patient relationships if outspoken men like Dr. Dolger were permitted to criticize drugs within earshot of the populace." Some members of the profession are apparently worried.

Some Cogent Questions

This action on the part of the medical societies caused Mr. Lear to raise many questions, among which are the following:

Do a majority of the physicians in the mentioned states [Illinois, Michigan, Tennessee, and Wisconsin] really believe that it is proper for drug houses to subject an unwitting public to dangerous drugs, and that it is proper for the drug houses to be shielded from exposure of this practice?

If doctor-patient relationships actually are threatened by knowledge of the dangers in drugs, why didn't the medical societies themselves act promptly to control the dangers?

> Instead of trying to silence expression of the true state of affairs, why haven't the medical societies disciplined those physicians who, in serving as drug house salesmen, have knowingly parroted to unsuspecting fellow doctors the extravagant distortions of drug house sales and ad departments?
>
> Why have there been no hurrahs from the medical societies for Dr. Martin Seidell, who quit a drug house (Pfizer) medical post rather than approve ads he knew would mislead his colleagues in private practice?

FDA Assailed

At a later meeting of the same subcommittee (on anti-trust and monopoly), Dr. Barbara Moulton, formerly on the staff of the FDA, made "grave and serious charges" against the Food and Drug Administration (Los Angeles *Examiner,* June 3):

> The FDA in passing on the safety and proper branding of new drugs, often caves in to pressure and influence from drug firms. Private conferences between industry representatives and FDA members on pending applications for approval of various drugs are the rule rather than the exception.
>
> Hundreds of people . . . suffer daily and many die because FDA has failed utterly in its sole task of enforcing those sections of the law dealing with the safety and misbranding of drugs.

The *Saturday Review,* through its science editor, John Lear, has been instrumental in alerting the federal government and the general public to careless or venal FDA support of certain pressure-advertised drugs —notably antibiotics. *SR*'s investigation of the activities of Dr. Henry Welch (fully reported and documented in the May 28 issue) was largely responsible for Dr. Welch's enforced resignation as chief of FDA's division of antibiotics. Supporting Mr. Lear's contention that the AMA and medical societies in general have played down all criticisms of Dr. Welch's overlapping loyalties, we find the *Journal* of the American Medical Association for June 4 announcing Dr. Welch's resignation in four short paragraphs, one of which quotes Dr. Welch's denial of "any lack of editorial or scientific integrity."

Psychiatrist Reports to AMA on Hypnosis

AP and UPI dispatches reported Dr. Harold Rosen's address before the 116th annual meeting of the American Medical Association on May 9 at Atlantic City. (Dr. Rosen is assistant professor of Psychiatry at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, and chairman of AMA's com-

mittee on the medical use of hypnosis.) The New York *Times,* May 10, states that—

> Dr. Rosen said he personally knew of very few physicians and no dentists who were equipped to handle hypnosis with medical competence. The use of hypnosis does not cause neurotic or psychotic disorders, but its indiscriminate use without proper knowledge of the patient and his psychic problems can trigger serious mental episodes. While it takes fifteen to twenty minutes to teach the art of putting a patient into a trance, it often takes a mental hospital or a psychiatrist infinitely more time to repair the damage done when certain regressive or unconscious fantasies are unleashed through hypnosis.

The Sacramento *Union,* May 10, brings out the following:

> A person can be hypnotized without knowing he is being hypnotized, standing up, lying down, sitting or in any posture. It is not necessary to put him to sleep with his eyes closed. He can be hypnotized whether he wants to be or not.
>
> Once hypnotized, attitudes or desires of which he is unaware in the conscious state may be heightened and expressed. Persons with serious mental or emotional disturbances can be hypnotized, and when hypnotized can be stripped of defenses built to repress those disturbances.

Different Angle to the Double Edge

Newsweek for May 23 cites another example of what may happen when a person is stripped of his defenses:

> Dr. Rosen described the plight of a man, hypnotized for relief of a severe pain in his back, who committed suicide by diving from a window several days later. "He had focussed his mind and emotions on the pain, and it had held his underlying suicidal depression on a leash," explained Dr. Rosen. "But when the pain, or 'defense' against suicide was removed by hypnosis, his depression took charge and he killed himself."
>
> Hypnosis, Dr. Rosen warned, can be a double-edged sword, wounding the hypnotist as well. He reported cases in which hypnotists with underlying psychiatric troubles became mental patients after trying to help disturbed people through hypnosis. "In the past seven years, I have had to arrange closed-ward hospital care for eight hypnotist colleagues," said the Johns Hopkins psychiatrist. "In the same time, I have been asked to see, psychiatrically, never less than three hypnotist colleagues a month."

Psychiatrists Against Capital Punishment

Psychiatrists at the same convention of medical men discussed the death penalty. As reported in the New York *Times,* May 13:

Dr. Karl Menninger, of the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kan., said here today that no one is sane enough to be executed. He said he did not know of a "single argument for capital punishment." Dr. Menninger . . . stressed the indiscriminate application of the death penalty. He noted that only one out of every 200 eligible for capital punishment was ever executed. And, he said, the victims were most often the poor and those of ethnic minority groups, particularly Negroes.

Dr. Hector J. Ritey, moderator of the panel and medical director of the New York Clinic for Mental Health, said the death penalty was an insidious means of providing sadistic pleasure to the public. He said there was nothing like an execution to give "vicarious sadistic satisfaction without acting." He cited the Caryl Chessman case, which, he said, nurtured such a public aberration for twelve years.

Insecurity Feeling and Death Penalty Linked

Dr. John Donnelly, clinical director of the Institute of Living, in Hartford, Conn., observed that the abolition of capital punishment generally coincided with the development of security feelings in a given culture. He cited earlier times in Europe when 180 crimes, including the theft of a loaf of bread, were punishable by death. In England, when police protection developed and a man was no longer responsible for guarding his own castle, high feelings about all crime gradually diminished, he said. . . . Dr. Donnelly implied that Americans would abolish the death penalty when they felt more secure in their own civilization and institutions.

Nature Sets Limits

Another evidence that Nature is, so to say, an "entity," comes through the observations of Robert C. Murphy, world authority on sea birds, reported in the New York *Times* for April 10. "My observation of sea birds," said Dr. Murphy, "showed very beautiful correlations with the findings of the bathythermograph recordings of the position of the Antarctic Convergence." The *Times* continues:

The bathythermograph makes a recording of water temperatures at various depths, and was used to show where southern temperate and the Antarctic waters meet. This is known as the Antarctic Convergence.

Dr. Murphy found that the sea birds, almost as if caged by an invisible wall, did not break through the aerial barrier over the convergence. Thus, on the northern or warmer side, he found such birds as the sooty shearwater. On the polar side, he said, he found such "truly Antarctic birds as the blue petrels, Antarctic fulmars, the Antarctic sooty albatrosses and others. The sea has boundaries as do the continents."

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The policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable basis for union among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that basis. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

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"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect; yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

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